Military-Industrial Victories in the Senate, Pps. 2-3

No, But A Little Celebration in Saigon Could Easily Be Arranged

"Would the North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong observe a three-day truce if I were to die?"

—Remark Thieu was reported to have made when U.S. Ambassador Berger and Gen. Abrams pressed him to go along with the 3-day truce for Ho Chi Minh according to Donald Kirk from Saigon, in the Washington Star, *Sept. 9.*

I. F. Stone's Weekly

Now Published Bi-Weekly

VOL XVII, NO. 17 SEPTEMBER 22, 1969 WASHINGTON, D. C. 20 CENTS

The Con Game of "Withdrawal" From Vietnam

On short range, as in the case of the 36-hour cessation of B-52 bombings, the answer to the question puzzling the whole press corps—what is Nixon doing?—is (I suspect) quite simple. He doesn't know. He is thrashing about like a fish on a hook, trying desperately to find some way to get off. He is obviously hearing contradictory advice from civilian and military sources, and he vaccilates, apparently depending on who talks to him last. If you look back, vaccilation is the chief characteristic of this Administration, not only on Vietnam but on almost every question of policy, from tax reform through hunger to school desegregation. Nixon even changes his mind about appointments when they seem to have been firmly made, as in the Knowles case. The tiller of the ship of State has rarely had a more unsteady hand upon it.*

The Strategy Goes Back To LBJ

When looked at from a longer perspective, however, Nixon's course on Vietnam, is not a thing of fits and starts. It was first projected by the Johnson Administration in 1968, and he is continuing it. A high Pentagon official phrased it very succinctly at the time to a friend of mine. "We are going to reduce the fighting," this military man said, "to a level the American public will tolerate for a long pull." The new course then charted was aimed not at negotiations with Hanoi or even at the "Vietnamization" of the war but at mollifying, or conning, American public opinion. For the Pentagon the main enemy is American public opinion and its "impatience" and even—for some silly Generals—democracy itself, as the means by which that impatience expresses itself**. The course of events becomes clearer if one keeps in mind that the Vietnam strategy is primarily concerned neither with making war nor peace but with public relations—a "snow job" to quiet unrest at home while pursuing the same objective in Vietnam. This is a Korean solution. The objective is a right-wing satellite regime, run by the native military with a constitutional facade but little or no civil liberty, in South Vietnam as in South Korea. To keep it in power we are prepared to maintain a reduced but considerable number of troops there indefinitely, as we do in Korea 15 years after the war ended. The 55,000 U.S. troops still there cost us $600 million a year to maintain.

Strange Way To Cut Back

We can't read President Nixon's mind and we have long ago given up trying to understand Pentagon arithmetic. But when the October draft calls were announced we checked back and found that draft calls are up more than 70% since Nixon at the beginning of June announced Vietnamese troop cutbacks were to begin. Here are the figures month by month:

	1968	1969
June	20,000	25,900
July	15,000	22,300
August	18,300	29,500
September	12,200	29,000
October	13,800	29,000
Total	79,300	135,700

Though never publicly debated, the main lines of this program have surfaced in the past year. Herman Kahn has had a secret withdrawal "scenario" floating around town. Its content was indicated in his article "If Negotiations Fail" in the July 1968 *Foreign Affairs* quarterly where he proposed that we appease opinion by Vietnamizing the war, reducing U.S. forces "in the next two or three years to between two and three hundred thousand men" while keeping two or three combat divisions in South Vietnam for a considerable period in order to "deter a resumption of major hostilities." The same idea reappeared in Secretary Laird's recent interview with *Time* magazine (Aug. 29) when he suggested U.S. forces "could be cut in half, to about 250,000 men, and kept in South Vietnam for an extended period." Many columnists have picked up similar forecasts and *U.S. News & World Report* (Sept. 22) said Nixon's hope last spring "was to have almost all 250,000 U.S. combat troops out of Vietnam by the end of 1970. That would leave slightly fewer than 300,000 support troops in the war zone."

This is the plan Nixon was following in announcing a second reduction of 35,000 troops by December 15. This would still leave 484,000 troops in Vietnam plus 28,000 Naval personnel and about 45,000 Air Force men in Thailand. This adds up to 557,000 men tied down in the Vietnam war. Nixon's first two cuts total 60,000 men. The *Baltimore Sun*

(*Continued on Page Four*)

*** To imagine that the B-52 "signal", if such it was, would get through one would have to believe (1) that Hanoi can read Nixon's mind better and faster than Washington can, and (2) that its communications with the guerrillas scattered around the South is far swifter than our super-duper electronic communications proved to be in the Pueblo affair.**

**** Two or three Generals apparently have told dinner partners hereabouts that there would be no elections in 1972 *because the military* were going to end all this "turmoil" by taking over!**

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Despite the Scandalous Costs of the C-5A, the Senate Voted for It . . .

EARLIER THIS YEAR THE PROXMIRE HEARINGS put the C-5A on the front pages. This giant cargo plane being built by Lockheed became the classic example of cost-overruns at the Pentagon. The target price for the six squadrons of 115 planes was little more than $3 billion. It turned out that the planes would cost some $2 billion more, or $5.2 billion. Any private business operating so sloppily would soon be bankrupt. Yet the Proxmire amendment on the C-5A to the military authorization bill was defeated 64 to 23. All this amendment called for was a reduction of $533 million in further procurement of this plane pending a comprehensive study of its cost by the General Accounting Office. The report had to be ready in 90 days, and Congress would be free thereafter to authorize further purchases if it then felt this was warranted.

Back At The Old Stand

Yet Senators like Javits, Muskie, Gore, Percy and Packwood voted against Proxmire. Fulbright, Kennedy, Hart and Ellender spoke for the amendment. The Senator who did most to defeat the amendment was Symington, back in his old stance as an Air Force advocate, with the specious plea that the C-5A would make it possible to withdraw troops from abroad. "I want to say here and now," Symington declared in a moment of unconscious satire, "that people who really mean it when they say we should bring these troops home, had better provide for the airlift because you are not going to be able to bring them home until you have some means to send them back." It was alarming that Symington, who is preparing hearings supposedly designed to cut down U.S. commitments abroad, is still wedded to the conception of a Pax Americana, albeit enforced by swift airlift rather than foreign bases. That way lies more Vietnams.

Fulbright in supporting the Proxmire amendment recalled what Russell of Georgia said a few years ago in blocking appropriations for FDLs—"fast deployment logistics ships" —another McNamara idea for implementing the Pax Americana. These were to be a kind of floating base, loaded with equipment and ready for use in sudden interventions. Russell said, "if they *can* intervene, they *will* intervene." Fulbright said this applied equally to the C-5A. Russell voted to another tune this time. The C-5A is being built by Lockheed at Marietta, in Russell's native Georgia.

THE OPPONENTS OF THE MILITARY-INDUSTRIAL complex were equally unsuccessful with the Mondale-Case amendment to block $377 million of new funds for a third nuclear aircraft carrier pending a study of its effectiveness by the GAO and the Congress. The best they could do on one motion in a tangled parliamentary situation was 34 to 51. This time Symington voted with the opposition but again as an Air Force man. He asked Case of New Jersey whether it did not give him "some apprehension that the Soviet

Three Ways to Measure the U.S. Arms Effort

Three items may help readers measure the U.S. arms effort. In the Senate Sept. 12 McGovern, in his speech against the new manned bomber, said we were spending "far more than China and the Soviet Union combined." At this point Senator Proxmire interjected that the Institute of Strategic Studies in London, after analyzing the difference in costs and military pay between the two countries, estimated that Russia's 20 billion ruble arms budget is the equivalent of $40 billion spending in the U.S. or one-half our $80 billion military budget. As for China, its entire gross national product—the Institute reported—is only $20 billion more than our military budget alone.

The second item turned up in Herman Kahn's plea for Nixon's ABM in the pro-ABM book Why ABM? (Pergamon Press). In arguing that the Soviets would be unlikely to give up an ABM altogether, Kahn disclosed some interesting figures to show how defense-minded they are. "We have in the past," Kahn wrote, "spent something like 3 or 4 dollars on offense to every one on defense; the Soviets have probably spent something like 3 or 4 to one on defense over offense." This also indicates who has been threatening whom.

The third item: The AEC Sept. 11 announced that it had monitored a Soviet underground nuclear test of low yield (less than 20 kilotons), the 28th underground nuclear test since the ban on atmospheric tests went into effect in 1963. We phoned the AEC to ask how many underground tests the U.S. had made in the same period. The answer was 186 "announced tests." The total number is classified. Even the announced number is more than 6½ times as many as the Soviet total. These tests are used to develop new nuclear weapons, like the ABM and the MIRV. The tempo of our effort is obviously many times theirs.

How The National Archives Here in Washington Unwittingly Honors Ho's Passing

De Gaulle cleared the way to end the war in Algeria by calling for "a peace of the brave." This salute of a soldier to a valiant foe made it easier to bridge the bitterness and sit down together. Senator Fulbright was advocating a similar gesture of magnanimity when he suggested in a letter to President Nixon that the U.S. send a representative to the funeral of Ho Chi Minh. Fulbright disclosed to Ted Knap of Scripps Howard (Washington Daily News, Sept. 10) that the idea was turned down as "inadvisable." So noble a tribute to Ho's memory would have struck a chord of sympathy in Saigon as well as Hanoi. The censored Saigon press was not allowed to express popular feeling. But the night after Ho's death a CBS reporter asked passersby on the street in Saigon what they though of Ho. All spoke with respect and regret. "Many South Vietnamese," the Baltimore Sun's correspondent John E. Woodruff cabled Sept. 11 after a trip into the Delta, "Secretly Mourn Ho."

In Paris Le Monde (Sept. 5) reported that a number of South Vietnamese deputies had even proposed to the President of the National Assembly in Saigon that a parliamentary delegation attend the funeral rites in Hanoi. Among tributes obtained by the French press agency from political leaders in Saigon was one from M. Nguyen Xuan Oanh, who was Vice President under General Khanh. He said Ho "could have been the Tito of Asia."

Strangest of all, Ho Chi Minh's historic petition to Woodrow Wilson in 1919 is on display here at the National Archives, almost unnoticed, as part of an exhibit unveiled earlier this year to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Versailles Peace Conference. Ho sent the petition because he and the Vietnamese people took seriously Wilson's promise of self-determination as they took seriously the Atlantic Charter's similar promises of colonial freedom during World War II. Both times they were disappointed. We reprint the petition on the next page. How much suffering might have been averted if Ho's moderate appeal had been granted fifty years ago!

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. . . And Carriers, Obsolete But Expensive Toys for Admirals Also Win Out

Union today has hundreds more attack submarines than the U.S. and thousands more modern air superiority fighters" but "has not yet laid down a single carrier?" The implication was that we were wasting money on carriers when we should be building more fighter planes and submarines. This is hardly an anti-arms race point of view.

The aircraft carrier is as obsolete as the battleship, of which it is the lineal descendant. Indeed the debate unearthed the fact that the only reason we have 15 aircraft carriers is that we were allowed 15 battleships in the 1921 naval agreement among Britain, Japan and the U.S. Each nuclear carrier task force, which includes four destroyers, costs more than $1.4 billion. The U.S. carrier forces last fiscal year consumed 40% of the Navy's $21 billion budget. They are a rich nation's luxury. Neither China nor the Soviet Union is building a carrier. Britain is phasing out its carriers. France is the only other nation maintaining them.

No Wonder They're Unscathed

Carriers have been used to bomb North Vietnam, which has neither the planes nor the submarines to sink them. Against any major enemy, they would be easy targets. Admiral Moorer, Chief of Naval Operations, told the Veterans of Foreign Wars recently that "in some 50 wars or near wars since 1946, we have not lost a carrier." When Mondale finally managed to get a list of these "wars or near wars" out of the Pentagon, it became clear why the carriers were unscathed. All the "wars" were minor. In some cases the carriers had only been "alerted" in Norfolk thousands of miles away. In others the carriers "showed the flag" off Loas, which has no coast; in the Zanzibar riots, where the "enemy" couldn't have sunk a rowboat; or off Guatemala, which has no Navy. For such "wars" coast guard cutters would have been ample.

After the Navy repulsed the attack on these expensive toys, McGovern (with Goodell, Hatfield and Proxmire) moved an amendment to cut $80 million from the $100 million asked to speed development of a new manned bomber. This is another luxury, an indulgence for the bomber Generals as the carrier is for the battleship Admirals. The cost of the AMSA (Advanced Manned Strategic Aircraft) will be around $12 billion, as much as the ABM. Russia stopped building new strategic bombers years ago to concentrate on the missile. We have been spending bililons not only on bombers but on defenses against a virtually non-existent Soviet bomber threat. The vote on the McGovern amendment had not yet been taken before we went to press Sept. 16 but its chances were slim.

It is hopeful that Congress is at last, for the first time, debating these wasteful military baubles. It is disappointing that the results are so meager. The "down payments" on ABM, bombers, carriers and Pax Americana cargo planes may ultimately involve $100 billion in expenditures over the next 10 years. With such funds, we could build a new America, free of poverty.

Fresh Peek Into A Dark Corner

Last April 21, in an article "The Best Kept Secret of the Vietnam War", the Weekly called attention to passages in Westmoreland's report on the war which disclose that in 1965 the U.S. put combat troops into South Vietnam not at the request of its government but on our own initiative, and that Saigon in 1965 while acquiescing tried to keep U.S. troops in the sparsely populated Highlands and away from the cities. We believe that when the truth becomes known, we will find that the U.S. "Americanized" the war in 1965 because we feared Saigon's last civilian government (overthrown in June, 1965) might make peace.

It now turns out that on May 12, after reading the Westmoreland report, Senator Fulbright asked the State Department whether it had any record of a formal request from Saigon for U.S. combat troops. He received a reply dated Sept. 2 and made it public in the Senate Sept. 12 (Con. Rec. S10509). The Department's reply was verbose and evasive, but nevertheless revealed that after four months of search it could find no such request. We think it time the bigger newspapers of this country dug into this curious story.

We mark with sorrow the death of Drew Pearson, a great maverick journalist of conscience and devotion.

Full Text of Ho's Petition to Woodrow Wilson at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919

"Since the victory of the Allies, all the subject peoples are frantic with hope at the prospect of an era of right and justice which should begin for them by virtue of the formal and solemn engagements, made before the whole world by the various powers of the Entente (Allies) in the struggle of civilization against barbarism.

"While waiting for the principle of national self-determination to pass from ideal to reality through the effective recognition of the sacred right of all peoples to decide their own destiny, the inhabitants of the ancient Empire of Annam, at the present time French Indo-China, present to the noble Governments of the Entente in general and in particular to the honorable French Government the following humble claims:

"1) General amnesty for all the native people who have been condemned for political activity; 2) Reform of Indo-Chinese justice by granting to the native population the same judicial guarantees as the Europeans have, and the total suppression of the special courts which are instruments of terrorization and oppression, against the most responsible elements of the Annamite people; 3) Freedom of press and speech; 4) Freedom of association and assembly; 5) Freedom to emigrate and to travel abroad; 6) Freedom of education, and creation in every province of technical and professional schools for the native population; 7) Replacement of the regime of arbitrary decrees by a regime of law; 8) A permanent delegation of native people elected to attend the French parliament in order to keep the latter informed of their needs.

"The Annamite people, in presenting these claims, count on the worldwide justice of all powers, and rely in particular on the good will of the noble French people who hold our destiny in their hands and who, as France is a republic, have taken us under their protection. In requesting the protection of the French people, the people of Annam, far from feeling humiliated, on the contrary consider themselves honored, because they know that the French people stand for liberty and justice and will never renounce their sublime ideal of universal brotherhood. Consequently in giving heed to the voice of the oppressed, the French people will be doing their duty to France and humanity."

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At the Best We Could Still Be Spending $10 Billion A Year in Vietnam

(*Continued From Page One*)

Sept. 16 quoted a "high-ranking American official in Saigon whose views have been heard personally by Mr. Nixon" as having estimated that 100,000 men could be pulled out without seriously reducing the fighting ability of the allied forces. One reason, he said, is that a number of soldiers sent to Vietnam to build airfields, logistical bases and outposts finished their tasks last year. We are still a long way from a real reduction in combat forces.

As Deluded As The Bombings

In a Senate speech Sept. 9, on the eve of the latest Nixon announcement, Gore attacked the Administration line that a "phased withdrawal, coupled with an unspoken but obvious pledge that we will keep enough troops there indefinitely to prevent collapse of the current Saigon regime, would convince North Vietnam that its cause is hopeless and therefore encourage Hanoi to negotiate." To negotiate under such circumstances would be to accept the Thieu regime and a political defeat. "In my view," Gore went on, "the history of the Vietnamese people does not support such a conclusion. They are accustomed to long struggles, spanning generations or even centuries." The policy of phased withdrawal, he declared, "holds no more promise of success than did the policy of bombing North Vietnam." He said it might "buy time for the administration with the American people" but "if it is used to tighten our embrace of the Saigon regime, the prospects for peace will be dim indeed." Fulbright, supporting Gore, made the essential point when he told the Senate, "It does not matter how much we talk about settlement, the war cannot be settled as long as we insist upon maintaining the puppet government in South Vietnam." But that has always been the Johnson-Nixon strategy, and that is their common conception of an "honorable peace."

The peace movement is slowly waking up to this con game, but it's going to have to embark on a campaign of public education to thwart it. Even if this scenario worked, and we cut our troops—and the cost of the Vietnamese war—in half, we'd still be stuck for $12 to $15 billion a year indefinitely in Vietnam. Our military still have a low opinion of the South Vietnamese army; at the best, it will be years before it can do without U.S. air, artillery and logistics support. At the worst, what happens if U.S. bases are overrun, if the ARVN fails to protect them, if casualties rise among the U.S. troops left behind? What do we do, send more troops in and start this whole miserable process all over again?

We are being told that things are not going well in North Vietnam. That may be true, but they can hardly be going half as badly as here. North Vietnam has no stock and bond markets, to fall steadily even as inflation grows. As this is written the financial pages speculate that the U.S. may have to pay the highest interest rates since the war of 1812—when the British burned Washington—to refinance debt coming due next week. It is the most dangerous nonsense to think that we can go on wasting "even" $10 billion a year in Vietnam while inflation eats away savings and racial-urban problems eat away the very foundations of our society. The message we have to take to the country is that the war and the Pentagon have become the No. 1 threat to American security, and that that we must get out of Vietnam and Asia before those quicksands are our ruination. *10 a.m. Sept. 16*

The Rat-Hole Economics Of B-52 Raids

"On Aug. 18 the U.S. Air Force executed one of its most ambitious air raids in recent weeks over Vietnam, with B-52s dropping some 1200 tons of heavy bombs. This compares closely in tonnage with the maximum raids of World War II over Germany or Japan. There is a subtle difference, however, which should be pointed out because it is a measure of the desperation or dementia which has overtaken the present tenants of the Pentagon. While in World War II a raid on this scale cost about $20 million, it would have inflicted some 30,000 casualties and $200 million worth of physical damage—a fair return on the investment by any logic. On the other hand, Monday's B-52 raid, like its many recent counterparts, cost some $40 million; but at best it wiped out a few hundred Viet soldiers and villagers while achieving practically no damage—save to jungle scenery.

"Oh Lord! Deliver us from the thrall of such military lunacy."

Francis Morse

Associate Professor of Aerospace Engineering, Boston University, in the *Boston Globe* Aug. 26.

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I. F. Stone's Weekly
Now Published Bi-Weekly
4420 29th St., N. W.
Washington, D. C. 20008

Second class postage paid at Washington, D. C.

I. F. Stone's Weekly. 2d Class Postage Paid at Washington, D.C. Published every other Monday except in August at 4420 29th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. An independent weekly published and edited by I. F. Stone; Circulation Manager, Esther M. Stone. Subscription: $5 in the U.S.; $6 in Canada; $10 elsewhere. Air Mail rates: $17 to Europe; $20 to Israel, Asia and Africa.

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